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REMARKS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the telephone interview conducted June 17, 2003. The foregoing amendment amends claim 1 and adds new claims 10-12. Pending in the application are claims 1-12, of which claims 1, 3, 10, 11 and 12 are independent. Claims 3-9 have been withdrawn from consideration. The following comments address all stated grounds for rejection and place the presently pending claims, as identified above, in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 10 specifies that the central component comprises a support dome for supporting a filter element. Support for new claim 10 may be found throughout the specification and Figures, in particular, on page 4, lines 7-9.

Independent claim 11 recites a cap configured to screw onto the filter housing. Independent claim 12 further recites a cap for the filter housing, wherein the central component is not fixed within the cap. Support for new claims 11 and 12 may be found on page 3, lines 26-27 of the specification. *No new matter has been added.*

35 U.S.C. 112 Rejections

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Applicant traverses this rejection and submits that the pending claims are clear and definite, as discussed below.

Regarding the term "approximately tubular" in claim 1, Applicant submits that the term "approximately" is clear and definite. However, in an effort to expedite prosecution of this application, Applicant has removed this term from claim 1.

Regarding an alleged lack of antecedent basis for the term "interior," Applicant has amended claim 1 to recite "an interior," thereby overcoming the rejection.

Regarding the description of the central component as both "permanently retained" and "detachable", Applicant has amended the phrase "being permanently retained" to "therein retained", which is not inconsistent with being detachable.

Regarding claim 2, the phrase "interacting polygonal contours" refers to an embodiment of the invention in which the central component includes a first contour or surface that has a polygonal shape, and the retaining component includes a second contour or surface having a polygonal shape that interacts with the first contour. The first contour interacts with the second contour to inhibit rotation of the central component during operation of the filter. The interacting polygonal contours are an example of how the retaining

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component may fix the central component by an interference fit to inhibit rotation, while allowing rotation of the central component upon application of sufficient force. Applicant submits that claim 2 is clear to one of ordinary skill in the art upon review of Figure 2 and page 4, lines 25-30 of the specification.

35 U.S.C. 102 Rejections

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Vokes. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection and submits that claim 1 is allowable over the cited prior art.

The Vokes reference describes a filter including means for mechanically cleaning a filter screen. In Vokes, a plurality of felt discs 1 are mounted on a cylinder 2 to form the filter screen. The filter includes end plates 5, 10 clamped to the cylinder 2 using a nut 12. A tube section 4 is also provided to retain the end plates 5, 10. The end plate 5 receives a packing ring 6, which bears against an outlet passage 7 of the filter head 8. The lower end portion of the tube section 4 is secured to the bottom of the filter by a bolt 11. The upper portion of the tube section 4 is secured to the filter head using a cross bar 15. A rotatable cage 22 surrounds the felt discs and includes scraping means for cleaning the felt discs.

The Vokes reference does not teach or suggest the claimed fluid filter. For example, the Vokes reference does not teach or suggest a fluid filter including a central component that is mounted *rotatably* around a longitudinal axis in the filter housing, as recited in claims 1, 10, 11 and 12. The Vokes reference also does not teach or suggest a filter including a retaining component that retains the central component by *interference fit* to inhibit rotation in the operating position, as recited in claims 1, 10, 11 and 12. Vokes further does not teach or suggest that the central component is rotatable into the disassembly position when the clamping force of the interference fit is exceeded, as recited in claims 1, 10, 11 and 12.

In the filter of Vokes, the tube section 4 and the lower end of the tube section 3, which the Examiner considers to be the central tubular component, is not rotatable within the housing, as required by the claimed invention. In Vokes, the felt discs 1, the end plates 5 and 10 and the tube section 4 are arranged and fixed together to form a filter assembly. As shown in Figure 1, the tube section 4 is fixed, by means of riveting or screws, to the upper end plate 5 and a nut 12 clamps together both end plates 5 and 10. The resulting filter assembly is rotationally fixed within the filter housing by the cross bar 15 and bolt 11. The cross bar 15 extends through and is fixed to the head casting 8, which is fixed to the rest of the filter housing using bolts, as shown in Figure 1. There is no teaching or suggestion that the cross bar 15 and slots 14 allow rotation of the tube section. Even if the cross bar and slots did permit rotation, the tube section would still not be rotatable about a longitudinal axis, because

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the bolt 11 also secures the tube section 4. Because the assembly is rotationally fixed by the cross bar and the bolt 11, the tube section 4 is not rotatable within the filter housing, as recited in claims 1, 10, 11 and 12. For at least this reason, the filter of Vokes would not teach or suggest a central component that is mounted rotatably about a longitudinal axis of a filter housing, as recited in claims 1, 10, 11 and 12.

Vokes also does not teach a rotatably mounted central component, because if the felt discs, and therefore the end plates and tube section, were able to rotate, cleaning of the felt discs, which is the objective of Vokes, could not occur. In order to clean the filter element of Vokes, the rotatable cage 22 must rotate relative to the felt discs to scrape off dirt and sludge from the discs. The rotatable cage rotates about the felt discs using the handle 21, fork 20 and bar 23, which is fixed to the rotatable cage 22 via riveting or screws. As described in column 2, lines 27-35, cleaning of the filter element could not be achieved if the felt discs were to turn together with the rotatable cage, because rotation of the filter element would prevent removal of the dirt from the filter element. Therefore, the felt discs, and consequently the tube section 4, do not turn and must be rotationally fixed within the filter. Otherwise, cleaning of the filter could not occur.

The Vokes reference also does not teach or suggest a retaining component for retaining a central component via interference fit, as required by claims 1, 10, 11 and 12. In the Vokes device, the packing ring 6 bears against the end of the outlet passage 7, as set forth at least, for example, on column 1, lines 41-45. However, there is no teaching or suggestion that the packing ring 6 of Vokes provides an interference fit against the tube section 4 or its lower end portion 3 to form a *retaining component*, as required by the claimed invention. The packing ring 6 of Vokes is used to seal the end of the outlet passage 7 of the head casing and does not seal or fix the tube section 4 against the end plate 5. Absent a teaching or suggestion that the sealing ring abuts and retains the tube component by an interference fit, it is Applicant's position that the Vokes reference does not teach or suggest a retaining component for retaining a central component via interference fit, as required by claims 1, 10, 11 and 12. Rather, as described above the tube is retained on its lower end by a bolt 11 extending through the cap and at the upper end by the cross bar 15, neither of which hold the tube by an interference fit..

Assuming, *arguendo*, that the Vokes reference does suggest a filter including a central component that is *rotatably* mounted and a retaining component that retains the central component by *interference fit* to inhibit rotation in the operating position, as alleged by the Examiner, the claims are still patentable, because the Vokes reference does not teach or suggest a central component that can be rotated into a disassembly position when the clamping force of the interference fit is exceeded, as recited in claims 1, 10, 11 and 12. Even

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if the tube section 4 were permitted to rotate, the tube section 4 does not overcome a clamping force of an interference fit to rotate into a disassembly position. Mere rotation of the tube section 4 relative to the packing ring 6 does not serve to place the tube section 4 in a disassembly position. Rather, the tube section 4 can only be disassembled once the bolt 11 is removed and the cross bar 15 is removed from the slot 15, neither of which occur by rotating the tube section against an interference fit. Furthermore, the Vokes reference does not teach or suggest overcoming a clamping force of an interference fit between the tube section 4 and the packing ring 6.

The Vokes reference does not teach or suggest a cap that can be screwed onto the filter housing, as recited in claim 11. Rather, in Vokes, the head casting 8 is bolted to the housing of the filter, as shown in Figure 1, and cannot be easily removed or connected to the housing.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant contends that claims are patentably distinguishable over the prior art. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 112 be reconsidered and withdrawn and that the application be passed to allowance.

If there are any remaining issues, an opportunity for an interview is requested prior to the issuance of another Office Action. If the above amendments are not deemed to place this case in condition for allowance, the Examiner is urged to call the Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: June 20, 2003

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